



**Kenneth A. Gibson**

**MAYOR**

**NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**

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GIBSON: "RACIAL BALANCE OF NEWARK EMPLOYEES LEAVES MUCH TO  
BE DESIRED."

Newark Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson said yesterday that he was "disturbed" by the racial breakdown of the work-force analysis. The breakdown was issued as a result of research done by the Newark Human Rights Commission for the U.S. Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

In approximate percentages, 74.9% of the city employees are male and 25.1% are female. In a city that is approximately 60% Black, approximately 36.3% of the city employees are of the same race; Whereas nearly 60% are White. The imbalance in the Hispanic community is severely sharper. Only 3.5% of city employees are listed in the category of persons having Spanish-surnames.

In a further breakdown, White males constitute approximately 50.3%, Black males 22%, Spanish-surnamed males 2.5%, and 0.2% in the category of "others" of the total city employees.

On the female side, White females are approximately 9.6%, Black females 14.3%, Spanish-surnamed females 0.9%, and "Others" 0.2%.

The Human Rights Commission defined "Others" as Asian, American Indians, etc.

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"The problem facing the city in striking a racial balance in a depressed economy and while the city is laying off employees, approaches being insurmountable," Gibson said. Commenting on the period of time prior to the Civil Rights Movement and the Equal Employment Opportunity activities, Gibson noted that "today's problems stem in large measure from yesterday's discrimination." He added, however, "No one should construe this to mean that the racial imbalance that now exists is the fault of any individual city employee irrespective of race; but, rather, the result of institutionalized practices which discriminated against certain races."

Daniel W. Blue, Jr., Executive Director of the Newark Human Rights Commission, noted that "the recent layoffs not only had a severe effect on Newark employees caused by losing their source of revenue, but it also continued to play havoc with the racial and sex balance." Of the 524 employees laid off as of January 1976, 155 were female and 369 were male. The total White workers laid off were 297 and total Black and Hispanic surnamed personnel who lost positions added up to 227.

"Thus, the layoffs did not drastically affect the racial balance, but did, in fact, have a highly negative repercussion on the Black and Hispanic communities whose average incomes are considerably below the norm," Blue said.

"Unless there is a state law passed which will allow for some type of 'preferential' treatment for people from racial groups which have been historically discriminated against, the problem of correcting past problems verges on the impossible. Newark City Government, and any

other governmental body under Civil Service regulations will just continue to ride the 'last hired, first fired,' merry-go-round," Blue said.

In regard to this aspect of compensatory or preferential treatment, Gibson made it plain that he understood the obvious dangers.

"Such an approach could bring about charges of reverse discrimination, or provoke constitutional arguments in the courts such as the case now pending in New York State. From my understanding of the case in New York, it seeks to prevent a certain percentage of minorities who have been clearly discriminated against in the past from being laid off in accordance with the seniority system. I understand the suit is intended to stabilize a certain percentage of minority workers before reactivating layoffs according to years of service. It will be an interesting case to watch," Gibson said.

"My approach to solving the problem of a racial imbalance of Newark city employees is to do what I can to un-do mal-practices which worked in the past and take a strong position on not allowing them to occur in the future. State Legislation which would help to solve this problem would certainly be welcomed and a healthier economy in the public and private sector would make solutions much more readily available," Gibson said.

In the last three years Blacks have increased by 7% of the City's work-force, whereas Spanish-surnamed personnel have barely changed, showing only a .6% increase. These percentages do not include any of the federal programs, the Board of Education, or the Newark Housing Authority.